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DHS Office of
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Wednesday, July 9, 2008

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Man convicted in girl's 1986 murder helps in the search for her body

BY AMBER HUNT • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • JULY 9, 2008

Past the waist-high weeds and across a winding river toward the back of a 22-acre plot of Macomb Township land are the remains of a 13-year-old girl who disappeared more than two decades ago, law-enforcement officials hope.

Arthur Ream, who was convicted last month of killing Cindy Zarzycki in 1986 and hiding her body, led investigators this afternoon to a chunk of land where he said he'd buried her all those years ago.

"It's been a long time, but he had pretty good recall," said Eastpointe Police Investigator John Calabrese moments after a Macomb County Sheriff's van drove away with Ream inside. Ream's staying at the county jail until his sentencing.

He'd been brought to the scene and loaded into a 4x4 to show detectives where to dig. He arrived about noon and was shuttled away an hour later.

Cindy's parents were asked not to come to the scene, Calabrese said, because the digging could take hours and the wait could be excruciating. But some of Cindy's other family members, including two of her aunts, said they couldn't stay away.

"We were always looking for her," said Karen Hoeft, 47, Cindy's paternal aunt. "It's been devastating. You always want to hold onto hope, to believe that maybe she's somewhere and she has amnesia or she ran away."

A jury ruled last month that Cindy indeed is dead, despite her body never having been found. Ream had offered the night before the jury began deliberating to lead investigators to the body as part of a plea deal, but the offer fell through.

That made some investigators worry that his most recent offer – which he made last night to Eastpointe Detective Derek MacLaughlin, who resurrected the cold case – might be a hoax. Now that he's pointed out the area, however, they're more optimistic.

Calabrese said if remains are found, police likely will be able to identify them as Cindy's because Ream said he buried her with some kind of identifiable item. Police declined to elaborate.

The scene has drawn dozens of investigators from the state police, the sheriff's office and Eastpointe police. Members of Michigan State University's anthropology unit are on hand, too, to help excavate the area.

The land, on 23 Mile Road west of North Avenue, used to belong to a friend of Ream's, police said. Ream often hunted on the property and raised bees.

Al Kukuk, former Macomb Township supervisor, said he bought the land in the late '80s in a distress sale. He rents out a weather-worn, three-bedroom house on the property, which otherwise is overrun by weeds and brush.

County Prosecutor Eric Smith said that Ream gets no legal benefit from helping to locate the body. Ream was convicted of first-degree murder before Judge Mary Chrzanowski – who also was at the scene today – and that conviction carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison.

“He gets nothing out of this,” Smith said. “As for his motives, I don't know.”

Ream told investigators he wanted to clear his conscience, Calabrese said.

Investigators expect the dig to continue for several hours before they learn if Cindy's family will finally be able to put her remains to rest.

Digging begins in search for body of Eastpointe girl

Christina Stolarz and Charles E. Ramirez / The Detroit News

MACOMB TOWNSHIP -- Authorities began digging this afternoon in an area in Macomb Township where the man convicted of killing a 13-year-old girl more than two decades ago told them he buried her body.

Arthur Ream, 59, showed police and experts where he thought he buried Cindy Zarzycki's body, but he wasn't 100 percent certain it's the correct area since the terrain has changed over the past 20 years, Eastpointe Police Inspector John Calabrese said.

If any remains are found, Calabrese said, they will be taken to the Michigan State Police Crime Lab for identification.

Ream left the wooded search scene -- in Macomb Township near the Clinton River bank -- around 2 p.m. after spending an hour with authorities to help direct them to Cindy's body.

Macomb County Sheriff's deputies received a court order from Circuit Judge Mary Chrzanowski to temporarily release Ream from the Macomb Correctional Facility in New Haven to help with the search, Eastpointe Police Lt. Leo Borowski said Wednesday.

Eastpointe Police began scouring the Clinton River bank in Macomb Township around 10 a.m. for Cindy Zarzycki's body after Ream told authorities Tuesday where she was buried. Borowski said Ream drew authorities a map.

Ream was familiar with the property because he knew the previous owners. He used to keep bees and hunt on the property, Calabrese said.

The property is now owned by a former Macomb Township supervisor, who began renting the home out in May, Calabrese said. The owner purchased the property in the mid 1990s and now lives in Sandusky, Mich.

Authorities with the Michigan State Police Crime Lab in Lansing and experts in forensic excavation from Michigan State University are helping local officials search a wooded area behind a rental home near 23 Mile west of North Avenue, Borowski said. A cadaver dog is on the

scene, but authorities are unsure if the dog will pick up a scent since it has been more than 20 years since Cindy's disappearance.

Ream had been sending letters to Chrzanowski that said he wanted to disclose where he buried the body, authorities said. His lawyer, Timothy Kohler, arranged a meeting with authorities and the judge. There is no pending deal for Ream even though he's divulged the location of Cindy's body, Borowski said.

"It's a great day," said Cindy's brother, Edward A. Zarzycki, of Rochester Hills. "I'm thankful that he's going to show us the body. It's just closure on the situation that's been going on for 22 years."

Kohler told members of the media who've gathered on the scene that they cannot speak to his client.

Ream was found guilty June 19 of first-degree murder in connection with the disappearance and death of Cindy Zarzycki on April 20, 1986. Her body was never found.

Prosecutors allege Ream got to know Cindy after she formed a relationship with his son, Scott. They say Ream invited her to a fictitious surprise birthday party for Scott to lure her to an ice cream shop. However, Scott's birthday was in January, nearly four months earlier than the alleged abduction, Macomb Assistant Prosecutor Steve Kaplan said.

Timothy Kohler said there needed to be more than circumstantial evidence in the case. And, during trial last month, he told jurors there were reasons -- other than death -- why Cindy wasn't in the courtroom.

Ream didn't testify in the case. He is serving a prison sentence in the West Shoreline Correctional Facility in Muskegon County on an unrelated molestation charge.

He will be sentenced in Macomb County Circuit Court on July 22 before Chrzanowski.

You can reach Christina Stolarz at (586) 468-0343 or cstolarz@detnews.com.



Lori DeKleine slaying 'about control,' court told

Wednesday, July 09, 2008

By John Tunison

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND HAVEN -- Ken DeKleine had many motives to kill his estranged wife, prosecutors say.

"The murder of Lori DeKleine was about control and manipulation," Ottawa County Prosecutor Ron Frantz told jurors Tuesday during the start of the murder trial against the former veteran Holland cop, a man once described as one of the most likable, dedicated officers on the force.

But police and prosecutors contend DeKleine's rage and jealousy spiraled out of control, pushing him to hide in the garage attic of his wife's home for seven hours Jan. 10 before emerging to strangle her with a nylon strap.

The death and Ken DeKleine's arrest stunned the community.

On Tuesday in Circuit Court, De-Kleine's attorney hinted that he would not deny the killing, something to which police say DeKleine confessed.

"I am not going to pull a rabbit out of a hat and show you it was someone other than Ken DeKleine who was the instrument of Lori DeKleine's death," attorney Floyd Farmer said.

In opening arguments, Frantz alleged several events set DeKleine off, particularly when he read private e-mails that his wife had on a computer at Holland Heights Christian Reformed Church where she worked as a secretary.

Frantz revealed details that allege DeKleine, 45, secretly got onto her work computer two days before the killing and sent several e-mails to his own computer.

"Ken DeKleine was involved in extensive eavesdropping and surveillance of his wife," Frantz said.

In one of the e-mails, Lori DeKleine, 43, talked with her attorney, Holly Verde, about extending the personal protection order she obtained in January 2007 against her husband. It was set to expire in less than a month.

In the e-mails, DeKleine also learned of a stalking seminar that his wife was interested in attending, and possibly allowing the organizers to use her story as an anonymous example of stalking problems, officials said.

"She felt she was the victim of stalking by Ken DeKleine," Frantz said.

He also learned his wife was communicating with one of her girlfriends, who also was about to get divorced, Franz said. The girlfriend's husband was Ken DeKleine's college roommate and a good friend, and prosecutors allege DeKleine was upset because he perceived his wife as meddling.

Add to that the anger he harbored over a custody battle during his pending divorce with Lori DeKleine, along with suspicions Lori DeKleine was having an affair with her therapist, and it was enough to put him over the edge, prosecutors said Tuesday.

During the first day of testimony, Ken DeKleine sat mostly without reaction as he listened to three officers

testify about examining Lori DeKleine's body and finding blood-splattered clothing and a nylon strap hidden under insulation in the garage attic.

But he smiled when his son, Christopher, 16, took the stand for sometimes emotional testimony about discovering his mother's body in the basement laundry room. During a light moment, the teen described how his sister, now 18, routinely made them almost late for school at Holland Christian High School.

Prosecutors played the 911 call Christopher DeKleine made after the discovery, a few hours after he came home from school. His voice was fraught with emotion, telling the dispatcher he could not go back into the basement to see if his mother was still breathing.

On the stand, Christopher DeKleine talked about becoming concerned about his mother when he found her cell phone and eyeglasses inside the house. He found her lying on the basement floor.

"I yelled. I was shocked," he said.

Prosecutors allege Ken DeKleine put a different nylon strap around his wife's neck and tipped a ladder over inside the room to make it appear to be a suicide. But the strap was simply resting, unattached, upon some overhead rafters.

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Wednesday, July 9, 2008

Ex-deputy charged in inmate case taken off sex offender list

Valerie Olander / The Detroit News

A former Livingston County Sheriff's deputy charged -- but not convicted -- in connection with allegations of sexual encounters with female inmates was registered on the Michigan Public Sex Offender Registry for nearly two weeks before the Michigan Department of Corrections removed his name on Tuesday.

Randy Boos, 34, has not pleaded guilty to any crimes. He is scheduled for "plea and sentencing" Aug. 21 in Livingston Circuit Court.

However, Boos has been on the state sex offender registry since June 26 as having three offenses for second-degree criminal sexual conduct with conviction dates "not available." The online public record claimed he would remain on the registry for 25 years -- until 2033. Boos' photograph was not included, although an address where he is apparently living in Howell was listed, not his marital home in Shiawassee County.

"That was a mistake and it will be rectified. His name should not have been on the registry," Russ Marlan, spokesman for the Michigan Department of Corrections, told The Detroit News on Tuesday after The News began making inquiries.

Michigan State Police maintain the sex offender list since a law went into effect in 1995 requiring those convicted of sex crimes to be listed on a public database with current addresses to keep residents aware of predators living in their neighborhoods.

"Individuals are supposed to register after conviction and prior to sentencing," State Police spokeswoman Melody Kindraka said.

Boos, a 12-year department veteran was charged June 11 with three 15-year felonies for molesting three women prisoners on three different occasions in April while transporting them from the county jail to the justice center. He resigned later in April amid the accusations. He is currently free on a personal bond, although he was ordered to wear a tether. Boos did not return phone calls seeking comment.

Lt. Gene Kapp, of the Michigan State Police First District in Lansing which investigated the Boos case, was surprised when informed that Boos' name was on the state registry on Monday. After making several calls to find out why, Kapp said, Boos registered himself through the Probation Department in Livingston County.

"He did it on his own. I guess he's trying to get ahead of the game. (As a former deputy), he knows what the requirement will be," Kapp said.

Probation and parole officers, sheriff's or the Michigan Department of Corrections are required to file notice with the State Police when sex offenders are processed.

Dan Chepeska, probation supervisor in Livingston, referred comments to Marlan, who said the unusual circumstance of having a visiting judge may have created some confusion.

Jackson County Circuit Judge Chad Schmucker was assigned the case by the state Court Administrator's Office after both Livingston Circuit Court judges disqualified themselves due to potential conflicts of interest. Both knew Boos, who had been working a six-month shift transporting prisoners between the jail and courthouse.

To reduce Schmucker's visits to Livingston County, the visiting judge requested a presentence investigation by the probation department so that a dual hearing could be held on Aug. 21, Marlan said.

Typically, a sentencing takes place about a month after a guilty plea or conviction by jury or judge. The presentence investigation is a personal history of the offender and sentencing recommendation.

"Normally the presentence investigation is post-conviction and the probation officer fills out the forms for (the sex offender registry) and sends it to the Michigan State Police," Marlan said.

The paperwork should not have been forwarded in this case until after Aug. 21, he said.

"I can't say if (Boos) did this on his own," Marlan said when asked if Boos requested he be put on the state registry before sentencing.

Boos' defense attorney Mark Gatesman, of Howell-based Gatesman & Spickard, declined comment. Livingston Prosecutor David Morse did not return phone calls.

The alleged offenses took place on April 16, 18 and 22 and involve three different women being held in the county jail. One was a 19-year-old Fenton woman who later pleaded to a misdemeanor count of larceny and was sentenced to two years probation, another is a 45-year-old woman facing various drug charges. She is expected to be sentenced this week. Information on the third victim was not available.

You can reach Valerie Olander at (517) 552-5503 or volander@detnews.com.

Policeman accused of stalking another cop

Lansing officer faces felony charge in Jackson Co.

CHRISTINE ROOK • CLROOK@LSJ.COM • JULY 9, 2008 • FROM LANSING STATE JOURNAL

A Lansing police officer is accused of stalking and harassing a Blackman Township police officer who arrested him on a criminal complaint in 2007.

Robert Vargas, 38, was arraigned July 3 on one count of felony aggravated stalking and one count of misdemeanor telephone harassment, according to prosecutors in Jackson County.

He has been released on a personal bond of \$5,000.

The accusations come less than a year after Vargas was convicted of misdemeanor telephone harassment involving a former girlfriend and sentenced to probation. During that September conviction, Vargas was acquitted of a misdemeanor domestic violence charge in the May 2007 incident, Jackson County officials said.

Vargas completed his probation in that case.

Mark Blumer, chief assistant prosecutor for Jackson County, said that in April, Vargas began harassing the Blackman Township police officer who had arrested him on the previous case. Authorities wouldn't comment further about what form the harassment took.

"We're disappointed that we find ourselves in the position of these charges being filed," Lansing police Chief Mark Alley said Tuesday.

Vargas has been on paid administrative leave since the original incident with his former girlfriend in May 2007. Vargas and union representatives could not be reached for comment Tuesday evening.

Vargas has worked for the Lansing Police Department since the summer of 1997. Following his conviction, he had applied for duty disability pension, the chief said, and was awaiting an official ruling on both the pension and possible disciplinary action from the department.

Vargas' preliminary exam on the new charges is set for July 29 before 12th District Court Judge R. Darryl Mazur in Jackson.

The felony stalking charge carries a possible maximum sentence of five years in prison, Blumer said. The harassment charge carries a maximum of six months.

In addition, a police internal affairs review is likely to go over the entire series of events and determine how it might affect Vargas' work status, said Lansing police spokesman Lt. Noel Garcia.

"It has to be determined on a case-by-case basis," Garcia said.

Vargas made headlines as an officer in 2004 when he was shot four times after he interrupted a robbery.

While wounded, he shot and killed one of two men involved in the break-in. It was determined that Vargas' use of deadly force was justified.



Muskegon Chronicle

Man arrested for abuse of vulnerable adult

Wednesday, July 09, 2008

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

RAVENNA -- A 33-year-old Ravenna-area man has been charged with physically abusing a handicapped family member.

Michael Lester Busman was arraigned last week in 60th District Court and is scheduled for preliminary examination Monday.

He faces a felony charge of third-degree adult abuse and a misdemeanor charge of aggravated domestic violence. The felony charge carries a possible prison sentence of two years.

Busman remains free on a \$3,500 cash/surety bond posted shortly after the June 15 incident. Court records show he has been directed to have no contact with the alleged victim, who is no longer in his care.

The Muskegon County Sheriff's Department was dispatched to the home of one of Busman's Spaulding Road neighbors around 10 p.m. The neighbor told police she found the alleged victim in the middle of the road in a wheelchair.

The 28-year-old victim -- who needs to use a wheelchair for all mobility and has another handicap -- indicated that she had been assaulted by Busman, according to the police report.

She said Busman had been drinking and they got into an argument, during which he allegedly pulled her out of the wheelchair and onto the floor. Police said that during the assault the woman was bitten three times and sustained a laceration that needed stitches.

After the assault, the woman was able to get back into her wheelchair and leave the home when Busman fell asleep, the police report said. She was taken to a local hospital for treatment.

Deputies also reported that the home was "unsanitary and unfit for a handicapped person to be residing in." Photographs were taken of the home's interior, and the state Department of Human Services also was expected to investigate, according to police.

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Universal health care push comes to Grand Rapids

Wednesday, July 09, 2008

By Kristi Jourdan

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- Local universal health care advocates promoted their cause Tuesday as a \$40 million grassroots campaign kicked off nationwide.

Supporters of Healthcare for America Now! discussed their campaign goals at the Oasis of Hope Center, 522 Leonard St. NW. The current health care system leaves gaps in coverage provided by some insurance companies.

Organizers aim to create a long-term, sustainable coalition to increase accountability and competition among insurance providers, drive down costs, pressure lawmakers and recruit supporters. The program is funded by individual citizens, foundation support and the coalition's organizations, which include local supporters Michigan Citizen Action and Michigan Universal Health Care Network, among others.

"We've all heard horror stories about people who have existing (medical) conditions who are denied coverage and slip into the ranks of being underinsured or not insured at all," said Dan Farough, executive director of Progress Michigan.

For someone such as 53-year-old Adrianna Jones, who could not afford insurance at one point, the lack of health care was frustrating. Jones ended up using Medicaid, which she said was "terrible."

That's where Barb Grinwis, a physician's assistant and director of Oasis For Hope, comes in. Her clinic offers medical care to those who cannot afford it anywhere else as long as they can provide a donation. She will still treat those who cannot.

"I have people coming in here that have congestive heart failure or kidney failure because they've had high blood pressure that's gone untreated," Grinwis said. "It's really frustrating because I would like to be more proactive in helping people to understand their own health care so they can help themselves more.

"But I'm just putting out fires."

Send e-mail to the author: kjourdan@grpress.com

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